Randomized Clinical Trial of a Computerized Contraceptive Decision Aid
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Colleen McNicholas, DO, MSCI

The most effective reversible methods of contraception (birth control) are the intrauterine device (IUD) and the contraceptive implant. Even though many women report that contraceptive effectiveness is important to them when choosing a contraceptive method, the most commonly chosen reversible methods in the U.S. are oral contraceptive pills and condoms. These methods are less effective at preventing pregnancy than the IUD or implant. Patient decision aids have been shown in other studies to provide decision support and reduce decisional conflict for patients making health care decisions. We previously developed a contraceptive decision aid which can be administered on the iPad and makes contraceptive recommendations based on the features of contraception important to the woman.

We conducted a randomized clinical trial of 241 women who completed the contraceptive decision aid prior to a visit with their healthcare provider or received usual contraceptive counseling. Women in both groups were equally likely to choose an IUD or implant, 41% in the decision aid group compared to 44% in the usual counseling group. Both groups of women were equally satisfied with the contraceptive counseling received. We also measured participants’ decisional conflict about choosing a contraceptive method before and after the visit with the health care provider. While decisional conflict about contraceptive choice was reduced for all women after the visit with their healthcare provider, the contraceptive decision aid did not have a greater reduction in decisional conflict compared to the usual counseling group.

Our findings indicate that our Internet-based contraceptive decision aid does not increase the choice of IUDs and implants, improve women’s satisfaction with contraceptive counseling, or reduce decisional conflict when compared to usual counseling.